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Application to the City of Calgary Council Innovation Fund

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Name of Project: s-PARK Pilot: a collaborative approach to animating public spaces

Sponsor: Alderman John Mar

Phone Number: 403-268-2430

Effected Business Unit(s) and/or Departments:

Land Use Planning & Policy, Parks, Recreation, Transportation Planning, Roads, Community & Neighbourhood Services, Transit, Animal & Bylaw Services, Development & Building Approvals and Customer Service and Communications.

Amount of Funds Requested: \$90,000

What is a s-PARK

First introduced in the 2007 Centre City Plan (CCP) and further supported in the Centre City Parks & Public Realm Enhancements Plan (2010), s-PARKS are a series of 'street parks or portion of a street right-of-way that doubles as parks space' (CCP, pg.78). The concept embraces converting a street environment into a temporary public space that accommodates diverse programming and event types. s-PARKS have a variety of purposes ranging from passive un-programmed recreation to a highly structured event.

What makes a s-PARK a s-PARK?

- A s-PARK requires full or partial closure of a public roadway
- A s-PARK is publicly accessible
- A s-PARK is temporary and flexible
- A s-PARK involves removable amenities/infrastructure

They are 'flexible and eco-friendly places/connections that complement neighbourhood activities and create spaces for localized celebrations and events' (CCP, pg. 78). s-PARKS may include: temporary areas for the community to interact, experience, recreate and socialize; travelling exhibitions and events; space to arouse interest and attract attention; and a place for temporary activities that bring life into the community in all seasons. s-PARKS encourage playfulness. They play a role as an incubator for public art, music, theatre, visual arts, poetry, sport and activities that complement and enhance vibrancy and community building. Temporality is ensured through carefully pre-planned and designed infrastructure and mobile, modular urban furniture and elements that will serve a variety of purposes based on the nature of the event.

Summary Description of Project:

a.) Summer 2012 Pilot

It is proposed that a s-PARK pilot be established in the summer of 2012 in Downtown West, on 10th St. between 7th and 6th Avenue SW. From August 6th to September 9th, closure of the street at the south end of the block and the creation of a unique temporary community public space will encourage residents and visitors to gather, socialize and connect with neighbours and friends. The north end of the block will feature a partial street closure during the weekends, with recreational programming and community activities animating the streetscape.

Administration is currently working with the Downtown West Community Association to identify and develop initiatives that will address community concerns including a shortage of community gathering places, lack of community identity and community vibrancy and cleanliness and safety issues.

Recreation, Arts & Culture is working with the community in developing a program plan for this pilot that balances passive and active programming and services. This may include food trucks and street vendors, ambient music, classes and demonstrations of dance, music and the arts, fresh green market and /or local artist collectives, temporary art exhibits, and interactive recreational activities.

For 2012, Parks will provide basic infrastructure that will allow Administration to test the s-PARK concept. Pending success, innovation grant dollars would support the design and acquisition of distinctive, movable and multipurpose street furniture and infrastructure (kit of parts) to build a unique and flexible community space that could be utilized in communities across the city.

b.) Establishing the Program

Building on a successful pilot and lessons learned from the summer of 2012, current s-PARK policy will be updated and an implementation and sustainment plan will be developed which will further refine the s-PARK concept. The plan will establish a clear design framework and plan for implementing s-PARK installations throughout the city. This will include the design and manufacture of modular street furniture and infrastructure elements that organizations and City Departments can access to create the community space; a process for developing, programming and operating a s-PARK; as well as a plan for ongoing branding, communications and stewardship of the s-PARK model for temporary, public installations. Although the s-PARK concept was developed in the context of the Centre City Plan, the concept will easily transfer city wide to benefit both established and new communities.

Supported and facilitated by the City of Calgary, partnerships will be encouraged with community organizations, Business Revitalization Zones, civic, educational or non-profit groups to utilize the s-PARK model to program and animate the public realm. The City of Calgary will develop a process by which community organizations can make use of all or part of the 'kit of parts' to create a s-PARKS space which they can then program based on their unique community needs.

Project Benefits:

s-PARKS and the temporary nature of public space

s-PARKS represent a new approach to the design of public space. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure and harnessing local interests and resources, s-PARKS re-invent the street environment as a temporary community and pedestrian space.

Mobile, modular urban furniture and elements allow users to create a variety of environments and unique physical spaces that respond to spontaneous and planned programming needs.

s-PARKS as a community builder

s-PARKS will enable social activities that can help to define and/or re-generate neighbourhoods and communities. Working with community members and/or organizations, s-PARKS can help to engage a diverse group of people, foster a healthy social exchange and build a sense of community.

s-PARKS creating a new sense of place

Sparks are public accessible space. s-PARKS provide citizens with the opportunity to access local and neighbourhood public spaces that foster interaction in unexpected ways. Responding to specific community makeup and expressed needs, changing demographics, and densification trends, s-PARKS offer a diverse range of programming and multi-functional infrastructure that can respond to changing times and values.

s-PARKS as places to play

s-PARKS encourage playfulness. They are public spaces that will celebrate the uniqueness of the community through interactive and inclusive programming and design elements that respond to evolving and flexible needs.

Proposed Timeline:

August 6th - September 9th, 2012:	s-PARK Pilot
October 2012:	Pilot Evaluation
November 2012 - May 2013:	Development of s-PARK policy and implementation plan
Summer 2013	s-Park implementation (City wide)

Budget**2012 Pilot:**

Concept development:	Existing resources
Recreation Programming:	\$20,000 (currently unfunded)
s-Park Infrastructure:	Existing furniture, planters, banners etc.

2013 Program Establishment:

Kit of parts design and sourcing	\$25,000
Kit of parts purchase and fabrication	\$90,000

Total Budget: \$135,000

Contributions to date:	\$45,000 (Parks)
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Grant Funding request:

Total: \$90,000

How does this project meet the criteria of the fund as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Council Innovation Fund?

The 2012 pilot will provide the opportunity to test a new approach to building innovative public space that creates a new sense of place in the community. The one-time programming dollars will fund a variety of animated activities that will complement the public space, respond to the unique character of the community and encourage both active and passive public participation.

The learning's from this pilot project will inform the development of a 'kit of parts' with the innovation fund providing seed dollars to design and build a collection of standard modular components that can be configured in multiple ways to respond to a variety of site conditions and programming needs across Calgary communities.

What does success look like and how will it be measured?

Over the six weeks of the pilot, Administration will work with the Downtown West Community Association to monitor public usage of the space and program attendance. In addition, feedback will be elicited through program evaluations and follow up discussions with the community.

S-PARK



Design Brief

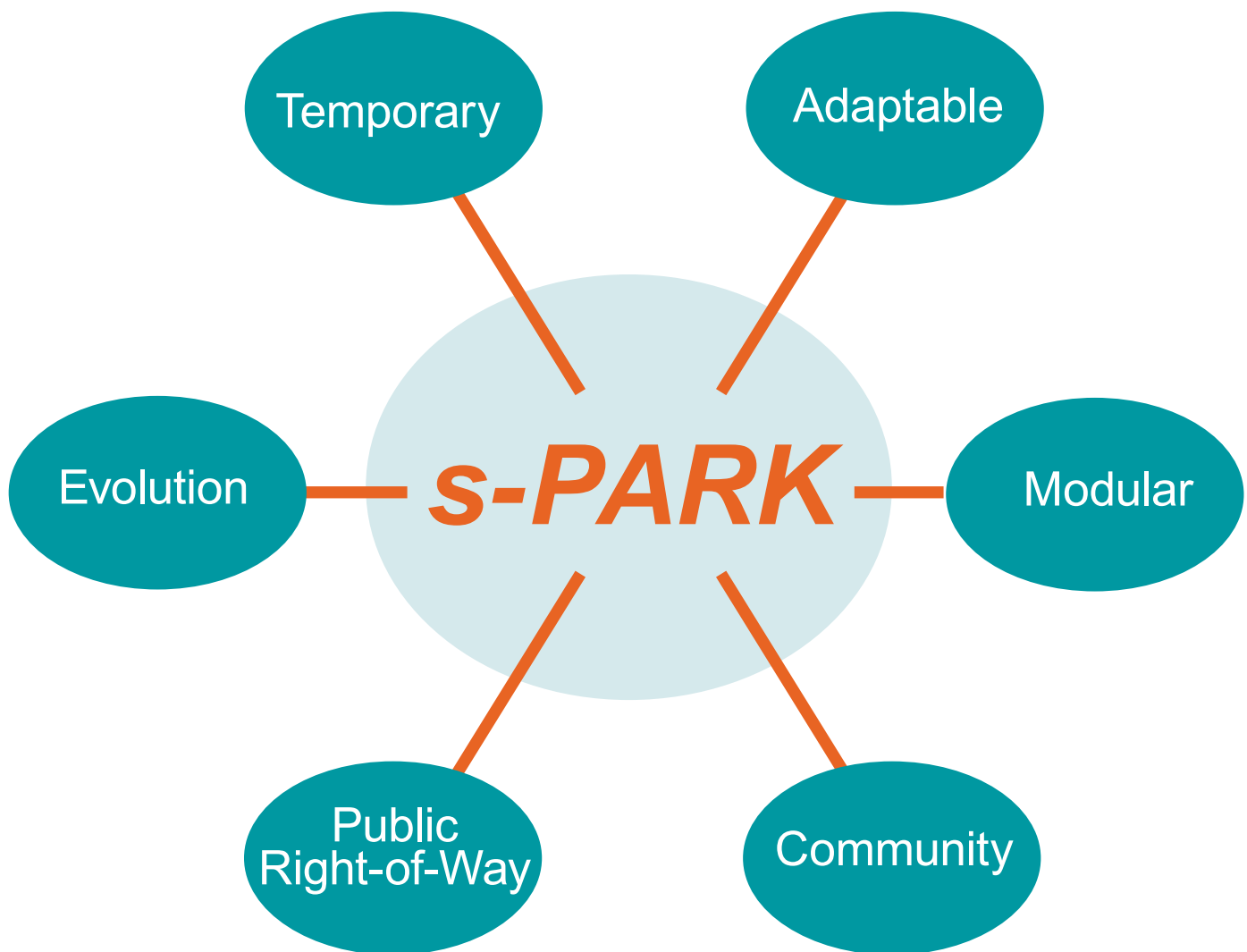
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LAND USE PLANNING & POLICY

6 Basic Principles make a s-PARK



What is a s-PARK?

A s-PARK is a fusion of two words:

street and ***park***

It is a new type of public space that is temporary, flexible and has the potential for accommodating diverse programming and event types, and for responding to the needs of communities throughout the city.



Transformation of a public street into a temporary park - a street park

Where is s-PARK from?

s-PARK, as an innovative approach to place-making was introduced in the Centre City Plan, but as an inherently flexible system or “kit of parts”, it has the potential to be implemented in neighbourhoods city-wide.

Responding in part to a desire to improve the public realm and to create vibrant streets and quality urban spaces in the Centre City, s-PARK intends to create shared, temporary, flexible and eco-friendly places and linkages that will complement neighbourhoods, improve the public realm and provide space for civic celebrations, special events or activities.



Temporary sculpture garden installed in the public roadway as part of a 2 week urban design experiment



Street painting as an extension of public space beyond the sidewalks



Evening street concert at the King Eddy



Community gardens



Modular street furnerture creates a gathering space and extends the public sidewalk

Community Building

A s-PARK is a publicly accessible space. The intent is to enliven the public realm, by creating opportunities for community building and neighbourliness, providing temporary open space to supplement neighbourhoods where public open space is lacking and to create a new sense of place in the community.

Although supported and facilitated by the City of Calgary, s-PARKS will create the opportunity for community organizations, Business Revitalization Zones (BRZs), civic, educational, non-profit, commercial institutions and individuals to propose programming and animation of a public space in new or established communities.



Modular gateway structure provides shade and a sense of enclosure for outdoor activities

Evolutionary

A s-PARK is a space in which to test ideas and to encourage the playful exploration and inhabitation of public space. It is a concept that has the potential to start small and to evolve with its success and grow to have a significant impact in communities throughout Calgary.



Temporary meeting space



A parklet occupying a single on-street parking space



Temporary patio tables and chairs installed along the Seine



Pedestrians experience a day at "the beach" along the Seine in Paris, with temporary decking, turf and lounge chairs installed



An evening campfire



Temporary seating for an outdoor performance



Informal curbside patio space leaves room for through traffic on the sidewalk

Temporary

A s-PARK is designed to be a temporary public space. Depending on the nature of the event or reason to create a s-PARK, an installation may last for a period of a few hours, half-day, full-day, weekend, month, or longer.

s-PARK is designed to be implemented day or night, in all seasons, providing opportunities year-round for Calgarians to be engaged and to enjoy the public realm.

Imagine a series of Chinook s-PARKS seemingly appearing overnight, or an evening gathering around a community campfire, a morning yoga class or simply a reason to pause and delight in the experience of temporarily reclaiming and transforming a portion of the public right-of-way into a vibrant and playful space for community. This is a s-PARK.



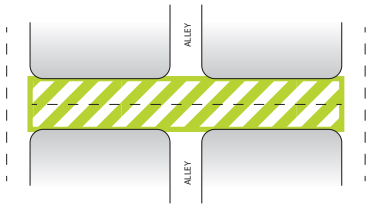
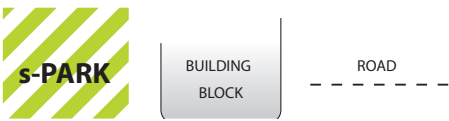
Creating light effects and a sense of enclosure

Adaptable

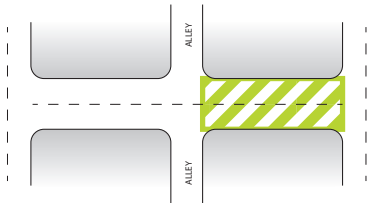
Designed as a “Kit of Parts”, s-PARK is inherently flexible and has the ability to respond to the context of a particular community, season, street or site condition.

A s-PARK is designed to be reconfigured for full street closure, partial closure, single lane, or pocket park. Similarly, it has the potential to support large-scale active programming or small scale passive programming, depending on the configuration of the s-PARK components and the design parameters and programming aspirations of a particular community.

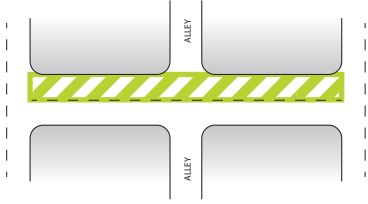
Potential s-PARK Configurations



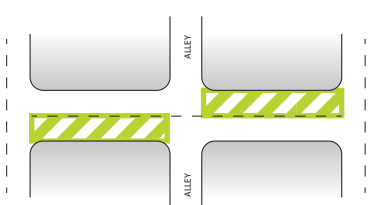
Full street closure (lanes closed)



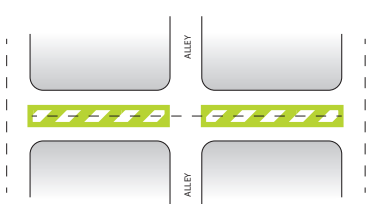
Half street closure (lanes open)



Single lane closure (single lane open)



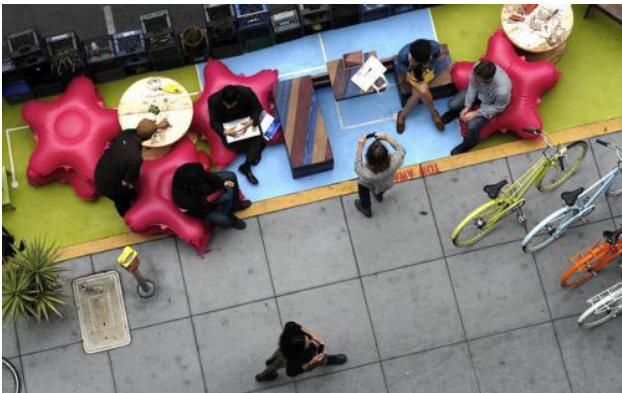
Alternate lane closure (lanes open)



Street centre closure (lanes open)



Evening street concert at the King Eddy



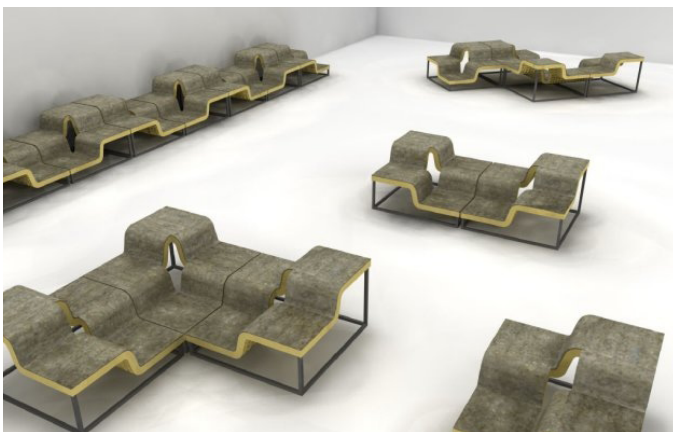
Moveable street furniture



Modular street planting



Modular and moveable seating and tables



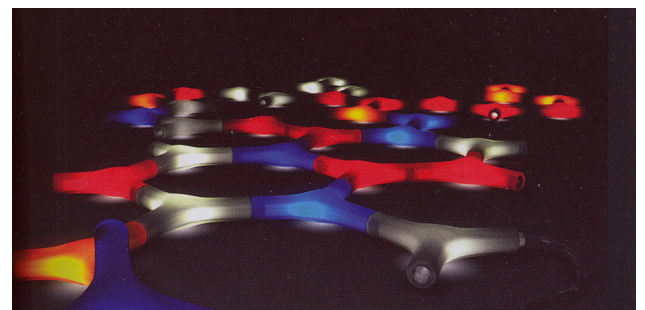
Wire-frame modular seating provides opportunity for reconfiguration to create linear or enclosed seating elements

Modular

A modular system, or “Kit of Parts” will be designed and manufactured as part of the comprehensive design approach for a s-PARK. Designed to be flexible and repetitive, the collection of standard components will have the potential to be configured in a number of different ways, creating pathways, stages, gateways, seating, enclosures, and so much more. Beyond flexibility, s-PARK components will be reusable, easily moved, easily stored, and easily installed to encourage maximum use.

The “Kit of Parts” design concept allows for flexibility to respond to a variety of site conditions and programming demands, but it also allows for ease of storage, transportation and installation of the various elements on site, establishing a sustainable approach to creating public space and ensuring longterm success of the s-PARK concept.

As a modular system, there is great potential for the public to interact with the s-PARK and to reconfigure certain components, playfully adapting the space to meet needs, and to accommodate an evolving program throughout the duration of a s-PARK. The ability to reconfigure components will be balanced with concerns for public safety, the environment and adjacent neighbours as well as for operational and maintenance concerns and existing City of Calgary policies, to ensure that a s-PARK is a beneficial experience for the community, and for the city as a whole.



Modular seating has the potential to be illuminated, provide wireless connections, or to be an interactive piece of public art

Public Right-of-Way

The s-PARK concept presents opportunities for alternative pedestrian uses in predominantly car-oriented street environments. Under-utilized public realm can be re-invented and enlivened employing a range of static and dynamic design elements, and either programmed or non-programmed activities in order to temporarily reclaim and transform a particular street environment into a vibrant and innovative public space.

An ideal s-PARK would be contained within one urban block and is envisioned for appropriate, north-south oriented urban blocks in order to maximize sunlight penetration and minimize traffic impacts. A number of potential sites within the Centre City have already been identified as primarily low-volume traffic streets which could accommodate partial or full street closures for a period of time. As part of the implementation plan for s-PARK, a similar exercise will be undertaken to identify potential sites in established communities and new communities outside the Centre City.



Modular pedestrian path with integrated seating and shade devices



Wooden modular seating system with integrated seating, tables and planters mounted on a modular deck



Modular parklets with simple wood decking, integrated planters and moveable tables and chairs create a vibrant gathering space

S-PARK

